

Lt. Governor John Garamendi Says Upcoming UC and CSU Board Meetings Need to Focus on Why Education Funding is Critical to Improving California's Future Workforce and Economy

CSU Trustees meet in Long Beach, UC Regents in San Francisco

SACRAMENTO - Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi, who serves as a University of California regent and a California State University trustee, said at the UC and CSU governing board meetings next week he will encourage board members to focus on their vital role in improving California's economy by investing in education and the future workforce.

"We need to stand up and say enough. Education already took a substantial hit earlier this year. California and its future economy literally cannot afford more cuts. In the short-term, cuts will cause massive lay-offs and slam the door on Californians wanting to train for the future workforce. Long-term the cuts will knock California down to a second rate education system and will put this state at risk of falling further behind. California will not have the innovation, curriculum and training programs needed to produce the nurses, engineers and green economy workers of the future. California's universities and colleges are the keys to maintaining and stimulating our economy." Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi said.

Investing in higher education is not an abstract concept, Garamendi said, because it has real and immediate consequences that can shore up California's troubled economy. The Lieutenant Governor said the recent high unemployment numbers are causing California's budget and economy to worsen by the day. The solution, he said, is to get unemployed Californians back to work through higher education. There is a growing green technology industry but few Californians are trained to fill the jobs. Garamendi said California's colleges, labor and business are willing to work together to develop curriculum, internships and job placement programs for our future workforce. This will not only put Californians back to work but put tax dollars back into the economy.

"In the fall of 2009, the largest freshman class in California's history is expected to enter our colleges and universities. Right now students are turning in their applications with high hopes," Garamendi said. "But the admissions door is already closing. The proposed cuts and tuition hikes (taxes on students) will make it even harder for them to go to college. If we are to meet their high hopes of a college education, we need to invest in them now."

The California State Trustees will meet November 18-19 at California State University Long Beach. The University of California regents will meet November 18-20 at the University of California San Francisco Mission Bay Community Center.

Link to new PPIC poll on higher education showing affordability is the number one concern : <http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=848>